

Banff Springs Hotel

IN THE HEART
OF THE
CANADIAN ROCKIES



Illustrated notes on the history, architecture and decoration of the continent's
outstanding mountain resort—a Canadian Pacific Hotel.

Architectural Notes

The baronial style of Banff Springs Hotel was no accident of design. It was chosen after much thought and research. The townsite was named by former Hudson Bay Factor, early Canadian Pacific director Lord Strathcona, after Banff, Scotland. In many ways the valleys of the Bow and Spray Rivers remind you of the uplands of Scotland. Purple shadows bring thoughts of heather-covered moors. Tumbling trout streams sing the same song as highland burns. Elk and deer have the grace and proud carriage of northern Scotland's stags.

All this influenced the designers. Mount Rundle, a longbow shot from the site, supplied the stone. Skilled masons fashioned a castle to dominate a highland barony. Now part of the landscape, Banff Springs Hotel, world's most famous mountain resort, represents luxury unknown to the richest highland chieftains.

Although for guests comfort every useful device of furniture, plumbing, heating and management has been adopted, interior decoration of the hotel has matched the spirit of the builders. Architecture reflects different influences, just as the work of succeeding sons had its effect on ancient strongholds.

Earliest plans were laid in 1887. A five story frame hotel was built on the present site a year later. The main part of today's Banff Springs Hotel was finished in 1913. In 1927 and 1928 addition of north and south wings completed the massive limestone building.

In addition to the limestone quarried from Mount Rundle, extensive use was made of Tyndall stone. Fossilized, this product of Garson, Manitoba, quarries decorates many Canadian public buildings. Here its use is mainly decorative — for stairways, fireplaces, window frames and arches.

Neither museum nor art gallery, Banff Springs Hotel offers much of interest and beauty. Architectural and decorative detail reproduces much of the best of the world's culture.

The ground floor, in keeping with the feudal atmosphere, is a series of spacious halls which could serve as settings for costume dramas of bygone days. Flagged terraces, stone floors, refectory tables, ancient armour, carved furniture, Medici prints, Leonardo tapestries, wall-panelling, wrought-iron work — a profusion of these rewards the visitor who makes a tour of inspection.

Public room spaces, the formal Mount Stephen Hall, the Garden Lounge, Oak Room, Library, Writing Room, Ball Room and the various anterooms are decorated in the mood of famous periods. Private rooms and suites were planned, and very successfully too, for the comfort of the guests. Every window commands a view of the magnificent mountain terrain.





Two stories high, the Reception Hall is noted for dark wood panelling and a heavily balustraded balcony as a complementary background to decorative pieces of 16th century armour and noble Buffalo heads. Thanks to the rightness of the building in its setting these decorations are congruous and serve to set off an interesting banner on the west wall, which was made from pieces of uniforms worn in the Crimean War, by a contemporary of Florence Nightingale. Windowed on three sides, the balcony is known as the Sun Parlour. It houses a collection of French prints of scenes in Banffshire, Scotland.

Representative of 15th century Gothic architecture, Mount Stephen Hall is one of the continent's notable rooms. Grilled balcony, cloister walk, beamed ceiling and masonry lend the dignity of age. The floor is of irregular Bedford lime flagstones. Named for Lord Mount Stephen, first president of the Canadian Pacific, this "great hall" bears his arms on one wall. Crests of four presidents of the Canadian Pacific Railway are worked in leaded glass windows. The carved ceiling beams are buttressed by crests of the Provinces of New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Alberta and British Columbia. On one the insignia of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, official guardians of the national parks of Canada.

Various periods are represented in the occasional furniture. Cupboards are influenced by early English pieces and leather chests are of Italian styles. On the wall of the cloister walk are five interesting Medici prints: Sophie Arnould by Grouse, in the Wallace Collection; Madame Sophie de France, Nattier; Gainsborough's Dupont; Vigee Lebrun's Marie Antoinette, from Versailles National Museum; and Velasquez' Infanta Maria Theresa. The gallery, bordered by wrought-iron railings in keeping with the whole scheme, holds a collection of oriental rugs. Reminiscent of Elizabethan times is a carved oak credence and cupboards showing characteristics of Gothic design. Worth more than a glance is a lacquered chest. Five reproductions, three from British collections, grace the walls: Beauneveu's King Richard II, Bacchus and Ariadne, by Titian and St. Catherine Crowned with Flowers, by Veneto—from Westminster Abbey, the National Gallery and Glasgow Corporation Gallery; Botticelli's Primavera and Portrait of a Young Woman by Veneziano.

The Oak Room adjoining Mount Stephen Hall is considered definitely Gothic. It is noted for panelled walls well worth more than a passing glance for their examples of linenfold carving.



Period

The elevator foyer on the main floor has some interesting prints. On the east side: Erasmus and Thomas More visit children of Henry VII at Greenwich, F. C. Cowper; Cardinal Wolsey at Trial of Catherine of Aragon, 1529, F. Salisbury; Latimer Preaching before Edward VI, St. Paul's, 1548, E. Broad; Village with Castle surrounded by Moat, presumed to be a Pattinir, a German Landscape, 16th century. Entry of Queen Mary I, into London, Byam Shaw; west side—Henry VII Granting Charter to John Cabot and sons, 1496, Denis Eden; Homecoming of the Herd, Peter Broughel; Plucking Red and White Roses in Old Temple Gardens, E. A. Paine.

To the right, or north, of the entrance hall is the Garden Lounge, a long, low, beamed hall. Wide picture windows command the Bow River and Fairholme Range. Scottish influence in the decoration is shown by the frequently introduced thistle. A suit of 16th century armour decorates the north end. An Elizabethan refectory table is reproduced in the centre as are excellent examples of early English chair-tables. 14 House of Lords prints, listed below, adorn the walls.

West Side—Lucrezia Borgia Reigning in the Vatican in Place of the Pope, F. C. Cowper; Henry VII Granting Charter to John Cabot and sons, 1496, Denis Eden; King John Signing the Magna Charta, June 15th, 1215, E. Normand; Charles I visits the Guildhall, 1642, S. J. Solomon; Founding the Bank of England, 1694, G. Harcourt; North End—Edward I (Eleanor being carried to London) E. A. Abbey; Queen Philippa and Edward III, begging for lives of the Merchants of Calais. East Side—Plucking Red and White Roses, in Old Temple Bar Gardens, E. A. Paine; Entry of Queen Mary I, into London, Byam Shaw; Erasmus and Thomas More visit children of Henry VII, Greenwich, F. C. Cowper; Cardinal Wolsey at Trial of Catherine of Aragon, 1529, F. Salisbury; Phoenicians Trading with Ancient Britons, Lord Leighton; Alfred the Great Rebuilding the Walls of London, 886, F. Salisbury; Queen Elizabeth visits the First Royal Exchange, E. Crofts.

At top of stairway from the Garden Lounge is the library with walls panelled in the Tudor period. It has an early English table. Opposite is the Ladies' Rest Room, with a crystal drop chandelier, and a reproduction of Botticelli's "Giovanna Tornabuoni and the Graces".

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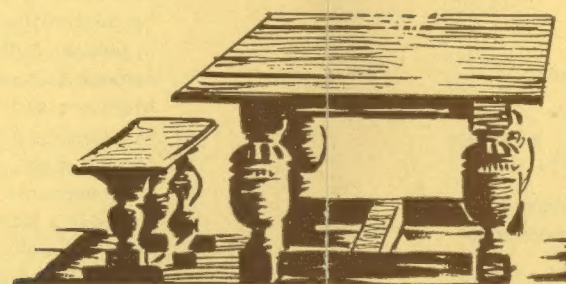
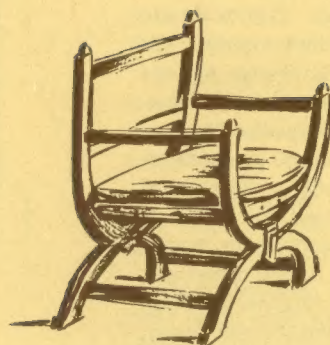
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The single pane windows in the Riverview Lounge are of glass imported specially for the hotel. The fireplace at the north end, with carved ram's heads, is of Tyndall stone. The furniture represents many periods—an Elizabethan table, Gothic cupboard, Flemish cupboard, Jacobean hall seats, Gothic chairs, courting chairs and love seats and many small Princess Mary chairs, and Queen Anne wing chairs.

On the west wall, south to north are: "Portrait of a Young Man", Giorgione; "Portrait of a Man", (Frick Collection, New York), Titian; Portrait of a Man, Martin Bucer.

The Fairholme Dining Room, off the Riverview Lounge, seats 650. It has cream-coloured walls, and pillars decorated with rose, maple-leaf, thistle and shamrock in colour. The sideboards are of Tudor and Elizabethan styles.

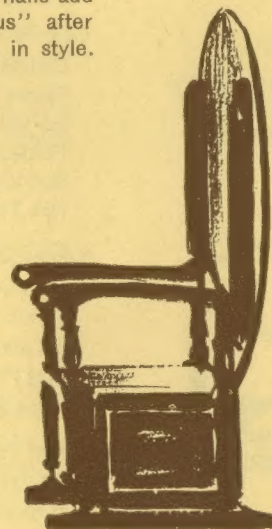
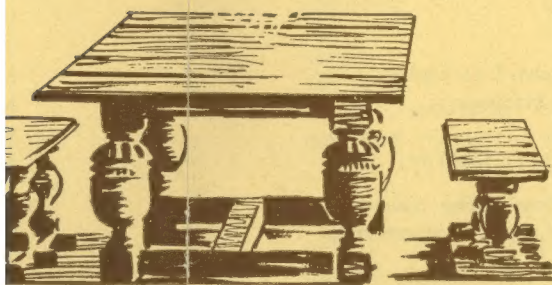
The ballroom, in drawing room style, at the north end of the first floor, has an area of 5,634 square feet. Indirect lighting adds to its charm. Here, again, chairs of many periods—love seats, Queen Anne wing chairs, reproductions of the Italian folding chair. The ceiling is done in white plaster beams, enriched with decorative scroll.

Opposite the elevators on the first floor is the Writing Room, its floor of oak planks and black oak pegs resembling the floor of a Scottish castle. There is a secret panel in this room. Its grapevine moulding and flat panelling label it Jacobean. On the north wall: "The Last Message of Mary, Queen of Scots," Allan Stewart; West wall: "Meeting of Burns and Scott," C. M. Hardie; South wall: "Burns in Edinburgh, 1787", C. M. Hardie.

Traditionally adjoining the Ball Room is the Conservatory. Fragrant with blooms, this glass-enclosed indoor garden has comfortable wicker furniture. Its glass walls command a horizon from Cascade to Hoodoos to Rundle.

Spanish influence predominates the decor of the foyer, focussed upon the bas relief of the "Santa Anna" over the fireplace, a leather and iron bench, and a gilt-studded leather chest. Massive bronze doors to the Alhambra Dining Room add to the beauty of the foyer. In the dining room itself the influence of Spain continues. Torcheres, chairs with twisted spindles and gilt nails add emphasis. Private dining rooms named "Strathcona" and "Angus" after Lord Strathcona and R. B. Angus, are both mainly Norman Gothic in style.

Pieces



Crests



For ready reference here is a list of Crests and Mottoes together with the names of officials of the Canadian Pacific for whom they were placed:

Mount Stephen Hall—

Contra Audentior, In Opposition More Daring, Lord Mount Stephen;
Modestia et Fidelitas, Modest and Loyal, Sir Edward Beatty;
A Mari Usque Ad Mare, From Sea to Sea, Dominion of Canada;
Manu Forti, With a Strong Hand, Lord Shaughnessy;
Nil Desperandum, Never Despairing, Sir William Van Horne;
Semper Eadem, Always the Same, J. M. R. Fairbairn;
Solus Christus Mea Rupes, Christ Alone is My Rock, J. W. Orrock;
Omnia Vincit Amor, Love Conquers All Things, Miss K. Treleaven;
A Cuspide Corona, From the Spear a Crown, M. P. Delahanty;

Oak Room—

Callide Et Honeste, With Skill and Honour, W. Wainright;
Fidem Servo, I Keep Faith, E. Alexander;
Ne Vele Veles, Form No Vile Wish, C. E. E. Ussher;
Fortitudine, With Fortitude, A. Allerton;
Serving Gubernio, I Govern by Serving, J. J. Scully;
Nec Temere, Nec Timide, Neither Rashly nor Timidly, W. M. Neal;

Strathcona Dining Room—

Persevere, Grant Hall;
Et, Si Ostendo, Non Jacto, And if I Show, I Do Not Boast, I. G. Ogden;
E Labore Dulcedo, Pleasure Arises from Labor, W. R. MacInnes;
Stat Promissa Fides, Promised Faith Abides, J. Leslie;
Haec Manus ob Patriam, This Hand for My Country, A. D. MacTier;

And now, to bring this Banff memory book to a close a few short-hand reminders of architecture and interior decorations and a directory of accommodation by periods.

Halls

Garden Lounge:

Monastery floor. 16th century Elizabethan tables. Walnut.

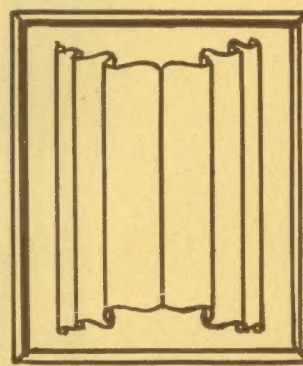
Reception Hall:

Table copied from one in Oxford University. Tapestry made by nurse during the Crimean War.



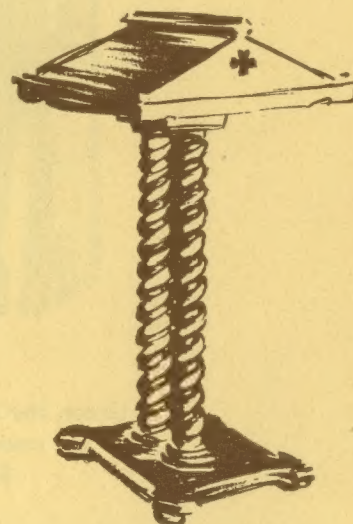
Periods

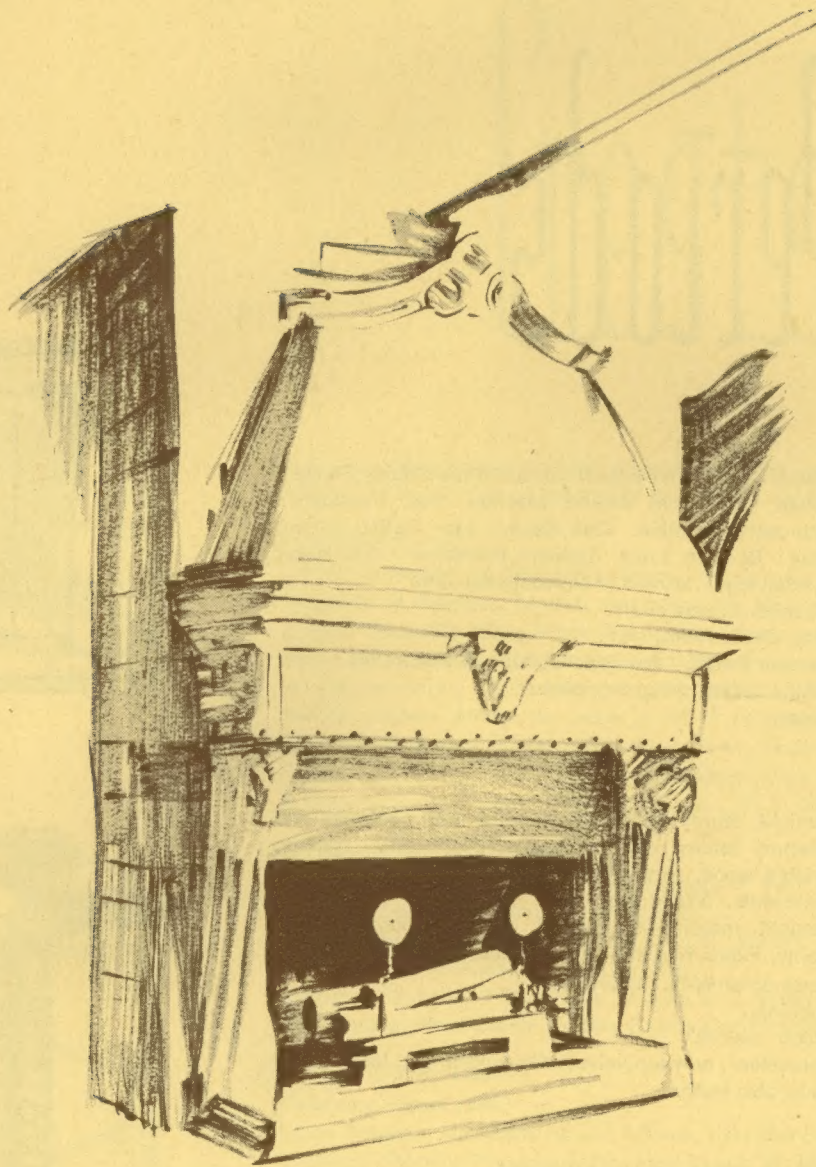
Curio Foyer: Plaque—Spanish, Philip II (Order of the Golden Fleece).
 Mount Stephen Hall: Called after Lord Mount Stephen (first President).
 15th century Gothic. Oak Room: Late Gothic period.
 Floor: Bedford Lime (Indiana limestone). Fireplace:
 Tyndall stone, carved in conventional vine.
 Alhambra Dining Room: Spanish, bronze doors.
 Dining Room Foyer: Ship: Santa Anna, 1495.
 Private Dining Room: Norman Gothic—Jacobean Buffet—Woodcarving.
 Gallery: Gothic desks, monastery desks.
 Writing Room: Tudor.



SUITES

Jacobean and Stuart: Straight, sturdy and squat, drawtop, early gate-leg and
 509-11-13 refectory tables, wainscot chairs, cupboards. Details:
 twisted wood, panelling, carving applied moldings and
 ornaments. Wood: oak.
 Tudor: (Elizabethan) Straight, massive and formal. Details: bulbous orna-
 308-12-16—508-12-16 ments, Tudor rose carving, linenfold panelling. Renais-
 409-11-13 sance ornaments. Wood: oak.
 609-11-13—(Jacobean panelling.)
 Italian: Wood: walnut.
 209-11-13 Upholstery: crimson velvet with gold fringe, tassels, and
 309-11-13 nails, also leather.
 Swiss:
 608-12-16
 Georgian: 208-12-16 Walnut, mahogany and satinwood.
 408-12-16 (Purple) Early Georgian: animal heads and paws, masks, swags,
 shells, scrolls, hoofs, lacquer, carving, claw and ball
 foot, ladder back, etc. Georgian: constructions—straight,
 small in scale. Details: legs square and tapered, or
 round and fluted. Oval and wheel backs, urn finials, etc.
 Empire: 241/3, 245/7, 341/3, 345/7, 441/3, 445/7, 275/7, 279/81,
 375/7, 475/7, 641/3, 645/7, 579/81, 675/7, 683.
 Louis XV: 379/81, 479/81, 541/3, 545/7, 575/7, 679/81.
 Royal Suite: Bedrooms: 687-93, 84, 86, 90, 92.
 Parlors: 691, 688, 694.
 Dining Room: Jacobean—695.





Grace, the beauty of simple lines, the carver's art as shown in the rams' heads, characterize the great fireplace in the Riverview Lounge of Banff Springs Hotel.